

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9579
INFO OAU CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1646

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, OAU
SUBJ: OAU MINISTERIAL VI - JUNE 29

REF: LIBREVILLE 1626 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY. JJUNE 29 OAU SESSIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY FORMAL CHADIAN COMPLAINT OF LIBYAN AGGRESSION AND BY ALGERIAN-SENEGALESE CLASH OVER CONFLICTING DRAFT RESOLUTION ON NON-INTERFERENCE. POLITICAL COMMITTEE COMPLETED ITS AGENDA WITH AGREEMENT ON DRAFT MERCENARY CONVENTION, AND ALSO TOOK UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF BANNING AFP FROM CONFERENCE COVERAGE FOR ALLEGEDLY MALICIOUS REPORTING. END SUMMARY.

1. JUNE 29 PLENARY FEATURED FORMAL CHADIAN COMPLAINT AGAINST LIBYA IN MORNING SESSION (SEPTTEL) AND LATE-NIGHT MEETING AT WHICH CONFLICTING SENEGALESE AND ALGERIAL DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON NON-INTERFERENCE STIRRED HEATED DEBATE. PLENARY ALSO (A) REFERRED GABONESE RESOLUTION ON PROPOSED HEADQUARTERS FOR TROPICAL FOREST RESEARCH TO OAU SYG AND GOG FOR FURTHER STUDY; (B) DEFERRED ACTION ON REQUEST FOR OAU AFFILIATED STATUS FROM AFRICAN BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON SOCIAL
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SERVICE; AND (C) DEFERRED UNTIL NEXT MINISTERIAL ACTION ON QUESTIONS OF OAU RESTRUCTURING AND FINANCE, WITH EXPECTATION THAT HEADS OF STATE WILL CONSIDER POSSIBLE REVISION OF OAU CHARTER.

2. IN ADDITION TO CHADIAN COMPLAINT, PLENARY HIGHLIGHT WAS DEBATE LASTING UNTIL TWO A.M. ON NON-INTERFERENCE

RESOLUTIONS. ALTERIAN DRAFT, WHICH HARPED ON SELF-DETERMINATION, APPEARED DESIGNED AS SEARCH FOR INDIRECT SUPPORT ON SAHARA ISSUE, WHILE COMPETING SENEGALESE DRAFT WAS COUCHED IN GENERALITIES AND FOCUSED ON ATTEMPT TO REVIVE MORIBUND OAU MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION MECHANISMS. ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANTS, NIGERIANS ATTEMPTED COMPROMISE TEXT WITHOUT NOTABLE SUCCESS, WHILE MOST DELEGATIONS REMAINED RELATIVELY SILENT AND LEFT BURDEN OF CONFLICTING ARGUMENTS TO ORIGINAL DRAFTERS. DEBATE ON THIS TOPIC SCHEDULED TO RESUME MORNING JUNE 30.

3. POLITICAL COMMITTEE COMPLETED WORK ON DRAFT MERCENARY CONVENTION. IN COURSE DEBATE, COMMITTEE REJECTED ALGERIAN AMENDMENTS WHICH MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS CLAIMED WERE INTENDED AS CRITICISM OF THEIR PRESENCE IN SAHARA. ALGERIANS MUSTERED ONLY 19 VOTES FOR THEIR DRAFT AMENDMENTS OUR OF SIMPLE MAJORITY OF 25 NEEDED FOR ADOPTION.

(COMMENT: MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN EFFORTS APPEAR TO HAVE PAID OFF AT OAU, WHERE ALGERIAN /POLISARIO POSITION HAS EVIDENTLY FAILED TO GAIN MAJORITY SUPPORT.)

4. POLITICAL COMMITTEE ALSO HEARD COMPLAINTS FROM ALGERIA, MOROCCO, AND MAURITANIA ABOUT QTE MALICIOUS UNQTE PRESS REPORTS BY AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP).
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FOLLOWING BRIEF DEBATE, COMMITTEE TOOK UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF DECIDING TO BAN AFP FROM CONFERENCE FROM QTE ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE UNQTE. (COMMENT: OAU WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT AFP COVERAGE OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS IN ADDIS ABABA AND LOME, AND AFP HAD BEEN WARNED HERE ABOUT EARLIER ANTI-ALGERIAN STORY. LATEST COMPLAINTS REPORTEDLY STEM FROM AFP COVERAGE OF ALGERIAN ATTEMPTS TO AMEND MERCENARY CONVENTION AND OF PLANS BY RADICALS TO PROMOTE POLISARIO ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE, ON BOTH OF WHICH AFP APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY ACCURATE. COMMITTEE DECISION, EVIDENTLY TAKEN IN ABSENCE ANY CONSULTATION WITH AFP, NOW GOES TO GOG AND ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR FINAL ACTION. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF AN IS UPHELD IN VIEW NEGATIVE PUBLICITY IT IS SURE TO GENERATE AND FACT AFP IS KEY SOURCE OF OAU NEWS FOR MUCH OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICA. NEVERTHELESS, ATTEMPTED INTIMIDATION OF PRESS DEMONSTRATES OAU SENSITIVITY TO REPORTING WHICH STRESSES DISUNITY RATHER THAN BROTHERLY AFRICAN SOLIDARITY.)STEIGMAN

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